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my grandmother who, with her plot of paddy land and her fruit and vegetable gardens, was among the wealthiest in the village, never connected these with her children or those of her friends.

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Grandfather died when quite young, leaving my Paw-Pwa (Grandmother) with four sons and two daughters, of whom my father was the eldest. Like all the boys of the village, my father after eight or nine years of unrestrained childish delights when he could play all day, in the stream and up and down the village streets, stopping only when hungry or tired, wheedling the grown-ups to let him sit up till late at night listening to stories, was sent to the monastery on the outskirts of the village. The word for monastery in Burmese, *kyaung*, is the same as the word used for school, and it was to be taught learning and holiness, obedience and discipline, dexterity in manual and domestic tasks, and to be given a deep spiritual influence to last throughout life, that Grandmother and her friends sent their sons there. The parents whose hearts suffered too much at the thought of inflicting any punishment themselves now handed
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them over to the monks with the plea that they would teach them to be good and obedient, and chastise them severely if they did not obey.

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The kyaung at Ye, like all kyaungs in Burma, was built in surroundings chosen for their pleasantness. On a slight slope overlooking the stream was a pagoda, the pagoda of the village where the people came on fasting and feast days to kneel on the paved platform around the tapering golden spire and recite the precepts. Down from the platform the steps were lined with shady trees, and to one side of this was the monastery, a wooden building with verandahs and tiered roofs, set in a large garden, containing a few flower beds for offerings at the altars, but chiefly wide shady spaces, great trees including a *nyaung-bin* (a sacred banyan, with huge spreading branches), flowering *gangaw* trees and deep green mango trees. In one corner was a well.

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The monks consisted of the *saya-daw*, the senior monk who acted as head and abbot, about twenty monks who had been formally admitted to the order and were called *upasins*, and a number of novices who were wearing the yellow robe either for a short time, or to be admitted as monks later on. My father and his companions were admitted as *kyaungthas*, scholars. The monks spent their days in the recitation of religious formulæ and teachings, in meditation, in the telling of beads and the teaching of scholars. They did this while observing a strict and simple life, abstaining from solid food after noon, possessing no goods except the essential articles laid down in the monastic rules, observing chastity and poverty. To the people of the village they were the embodiment of good and holiness, living the noblest and most meritorious life a man can live. The people addressed them in conversation as

"Your holiness" and themselves as "Your holiness' pupil". The monks addressed the people as *daga*, giver, for they lived by the gifts of the people who donated robes, household articles and other necessities to the monasteries, as good works which brought them merit.

When my grandparents took my father to the kyaung he was a frightened little boy dressed in a cotton skirt called a *longyi*, and a shirt without cuffs and collar; his hair was grown long in the centre and tied in a knot, the sides being cut in a fringe about two inches long all round, and the rest shaved clean, a way of growing hair common to both little boys and girls and enhancing their youthful appearance. He and all the other scholars performed the domestic tasks of the monastery, swept and rubbed the good hard wooden floors, the monastery grounds and pagoda steps, because in these precincts all comers went barefoot; they drew water for drinking, and for the bath of the older monks; they followed the monks on their rounds, two of them bearing a pole on which was slung a covered tray, to take any food donated in excess of what would go into the monk's bowl; they waited on the monks at meals; they learned to read and write, and do simple sums, to recite precepts and religious passages which they shouted at the tops of their childish voices in imitation of the deep intoning voice of the teacher monk, phrase by phrase; in the evenings they went home to eat the meal which the monks abstained from, but came back at sunset to recite the lessons of the day and many past days all over again, to join in the assembled night prayers, to sleep in the monastery and rise again before dawn.

When my father spoke to us of his years in the monastery he always chuckled with delight, in spite of this long list of disciplined tasks. He had the advantage from the first; he was stronger and taller than other boys, and in a system where all learning was by heart he had brilliant memorising powers. The school-room of the kyaung had not the formal atmosphere of the Western school-room with each child at a desk and chair, and a silence except for the voice of teacher or child. The monastery boys all went into the same big room of the monastery, irrespective of age or stage, each with his slate or book, got down on the floor

all verandahs, trees, window-sills and gateways, the facade of the hall bearing a giant lantern in the shape of the Buddha. In the town the gayest display was put on by the trader residents of Gold Mountain and Goods Bazaar Rows. These people who cared not for races, garden tea parties nor fashionable weddings, put all their zest into the Tasaungdaing celebration. Each entrance to the streets was spanned with arch and pavilion, and between the two ends were contained lights, feeding at each house, a stage show, arrays of presents which were being offered to monasteries, and a jostling mass of people from all parts of the town. Among all the glitter moved the daughters of the houses, also on display; their breasts sparkling with the full stock of jewellery, the diamond spangles in their hair trembling in scintillation like the quivering balls of silver and tinsel on the decorations around them.

All this tinsel and glitter, sparkle and glistening tintillation reached its crowning point, only to be shown as vanity, fantasy, in the spectacle put forth at the cremation of a revered hpongyi—one whose life on the earth was all austerity and solidness of the worth of gold. A monk dies and is embalmed in honey and put to lie in state for perhaps a year, while the *lu*, ordinary humans, prepare for the cremation that is to send him off on his return flight to higher states of existence. He whose life has been lived in accordance with the belief that all earthly things, all ornament and pleasures of the earth, are illusion, impermanence and struggle, now has his exit prepared for by weaker mortals who build and decorate a seven-tiered pavilion for his pyre; and fantastic mammoth creatures to flank it high in the sky—giant birds, tigers and elephants, high on the slopes of Shwe Dagon Hill, tall and gigantic, but empty within, of inflammable bamboo and paper, caparisoned with gaudy, floating trimmings. Under the vast shadows of these empty creatures gay pavilions for feeding and the sale of bright wares are put up, lights are festooned for a night bazaar. When the day dawns for the burning, crowds throng to the fair, in merriment because the monk who so long ago renounced his attachment to human affections leaves no grieving widow and children; the coffin is lifted into its tiered catafalque and laid on a bed of inflammable tinder; it is drawn to the centre of the giant animals. When the feasting, buying and jostling have had their run, word passes round that the final moment is about to take place; people are drawn towards the canopy; the masters of ceremony throw rockets and torches into the decked bier; four, five and suddenly a hundred tongues of fire lick the bamboo, paper and the bed of tinder, and a magnificent blaze rises into the sky. Soon other torches set aflame the row of animals, and elephants, tigers, boats and birds go up in smoke, together with canopy, bier and coffin, leaving no traces of the saintly body. Excitement abates, the

766 crowds leave the fair, the sellers their stalls, and of the caparisoned field
•793 only a charred blackness remains.

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922 So soon the fires of war were to burn up not only the show and tinsel of Burma, but things more solid and golden than the life of a monk —rice fields and food of all kinds, *ain-daung-pyit-si*, the setting-up-house-goods of a million husbanding families, the houses, villages and towns whose peace allowed men and women to weave, cure fish, make boats, carve silver and wood and ivory, and indulge their laughing children. December 8th fell soon after the full moon of Tasaungmon, when the Lent-free season was but short-lived, and laid a blight upon the whole country. Destruction was so swift, so sudden.

For nations which declare war or have war declared on them, the day of outbreak ushers in a grim period, but it is clear in the minds of the people that this is a call to effort and sacrifice, for the idea of nation, sovereignty, liberty, whatever they have learnt to hold dear for long generations, or else have just newly won to cherish as something precious. They know, when war is declared, that they must defend their country, have ready for sacrifice their young men, and work with grim industry in a geared-up machine. But how could this apply in the case of Burma, a country which had lost proud sovereignty fifty-five years before, which had not yet gained a modern replacement for it, and which felt itself to be only incidentally in the path of the war monster's appetite. Even those of the people who had been expecting war with the rumours that flew around Rangoon for the six months previous to this, either from people who had cause to know or from a clear judgment, did not know quite how to feel when it came upon them. In our family councils as to which place would offer the best sanctuary from bombs, gunfire and the recklessness of fighting soldiery, a young cousin opposed the idea of our ancestral Thaton as being directly in the path of the invader. "Well, what if it is," said her mother; "do we go to the middle of the roadway, and stand, looking up with mouth open to receive the cannon balls? We are human beings, eating rice. We can reason like human beings and move aside, avoid a little, and the menace will go straight down the road, and after a time leave us safe behind."

This might be regarded as typical enough of the attitude of the majority of people—to move aside from big places and the scenes of war, to leave posts when to hold on to them would be snapping with jaws agape at the gunfire of a fast-winning invader. But the results of this policy was enough to fill us with wretchedness. People ran here and there, from one set of relatives to another, not always welcoming; setting out with foolish encumbrances of goods and chattels and gradually being

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

778 articles for household use. The platform is never deserted.
788 Even long after midnight the voice of the worshipper may be heard in the night air, chanting in solemn monotone his pious aspirations, while on a duty-day, and especially on a feast-day, the laughing, joyous crowd of men and maidens, in their gay national dress, makes the platform of the Shwe Dagôn one of the finest sights in the world.

The Shwe Dagôn Payā is by far the most widely celebrated of the great Buddhist shrines, but there are others which, if not so venerated in other lands, still enjoy an even greater local reputation for sanctity, and attract pilgrims from all parts of Burma and the dependent hills, with now and again a band of pious worshippers from distant countries.
[563] Chief among these is the Shwe Hmaw-daw at Pegu, which commands Talaing worship before even the shrine of "the slanted beam" on the Theinguttara hill. The pond close by it was covered with lotus blossoms immediately on the construction of the shapely spire and the great Tha-gyā Min, and countless Byammās and Nat-dēwas assisted at the enshrinement of the relics. As with many other fanes, the king granted to the pagoda, and set apart from secular uses for ever, the whole space round it on which the shadow of the original pile fell between sunset and sunrise. Several
● [793] hundred families were dedicated to its service, and in 1881 large sums were raised throughout all the low country for the manufacture of a new hti and the gilding of the whole surface, while many wondrous signs in the neighbourhood attested the sacred character of the undertaking. Similarly the Shwe San-daw at Prome, with its multitude of bells on the cramped hill-top, enjoys a special reputation on account of the prophecy there spoken by Shin Gautama himself, and the connection of the payā with the national hero-king, Dwut-tabaung, as recorded in the sacred books. In proof
778 of this there exists to the present day, and may be seen at
212 the foot of the hill, a huge stone with an inscription which none but the pure-minded can read, and few even of them understand. In other places examples of this duganan kye-ganan, a kind of cypher-writing, or cryptograph, as it appears to the unenfranchised, exists, and usually records in mystic phraseology and inverted orthography the alms presented to

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

778 1784 (1146 B.E.). According to the inscription, the king drew this Arakan Gautama to the shrine by the charm of his piety, but the historical books speak only of rough force of arms. However that may be, it is a mystery how the huge masses of metal—the figure was cast in three sections—were brought over the steep, pathless mountain sides. The inscription flatters the king, and the monks ascribe the feat to supernatural help, as they do the faultless joining together of the pieces. The image was set up, so says the legend, during the lifetime of the Great Master. The utmost skill and most persistent energy had failed in fitting the parts together, and the feelings of the pious were fearfully lacerated by the cracking of the head in their futile struggles. But the Buddha, perceiving from afar what was going on, and ever full of pity, came himself to the spot, and, embracing the image seven times, so joined together the fragments that the most sceptical eye cannot detect the points of junction, while the head was restored to its pristine smoothness. So like was the image, and so sublime the effulgence which shone around during the manifestation, that the reverently gazing crowd could not determine which was the model and which the Master. The resemblance has no doubt faded away with the wickedness of later times, for unlike most Burmese images, the Payā Gyi has most gross and repulsive features. Inspired by the divine embrace the figure spoke, but afterwards received the Teacher's command never again to open its lips till Arimadéya should come to reveal the new Law. The shrine in which it stands is one of the most splendid in the country. The image itself is covered by a great seven-roofed pya-that with goodly pillars, the ceiling gorgeous with mosaics. Long colonnades, supported on 252 massive pillars, all richly gilt and carved, with frescoed roofs and sides, lead up to it, and daily from the royal palace used to come sumptuous offerings in stately procession, marshalled by one of the ministers and shaded by the white umbrella, the emblem of sovereignty and the prerogative of the Arbiter of Existence. On its first arrival a hundred and twenty families of Arakanese were assigned as slaves of the payā, and the number was frequently afterwards added to. In a long gallery there is an enormous number of inscriptions,

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Europeans) AP1
Burmese AP4

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feast, are heaped up piles of fruits, savoury curries, cakes, biscuits, and sweetmeats of all kinds, intended for the monks; while scattered about are great *repoussé* silver bowls full of sherbet, gold and silver cups, lamps, mirrors, and all the familiar adornments, fit enough for a private house, but singularly out of place where a gay piece of tapestry hung up barely conceals the image at the eastern side of the rest-house. Maung Maung offers us some lemonade, and we light cheroots, exchange a few compliments with the ladies, and pass on, just as a noisy half-dozen of young Englishmen from one of the mercantile houses come scrambling up the ladder-like steps. It would be well if these gentlemen would remember that each of the houses is to all intents and purposes a private assembly for the night, and that, though the host always welcomes them, he understands English, and does not by any means relish the mocking comments which are lavished on everything, and still less is inclined to approve of the criticisms passed on the ladies. But then there are so few Englishmen in Burma who understand the very shortest sentence in the language that they may be pardoned if they mistake for a promiscuous saturnalia what is nominally a religious ceremony. We leave them joking with Maung Maung and the hostess, as she offers them some beer—beer in a monastery! But then it is known that Englishmen will be there, and the Burman's notion is that an Englishman only leaves off drinking beer when he drinks brandy, so this last indignity is not objected to by the yahans.

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Farther on we come to the place we are specially in search of. The master of ceremonies here is our friend Maung Po Si, a Patama Byan, a certificated theologian and long resident in Mandalay, qualified, therefore, to be a yahan himself, and from his previous experiences, one would think, not at all likely to countenance such open contempt of the provisions of the Wini, which treatise his success in the above-mentioned "theological tripos" implies that he knows by heart. But "Mr. Grandfather Oil" is very emphatically in the world of kāma; he is far from having beaten down the passions, and his place is the most startlingly secular of them all. He has got the kyaung of a myizzi mati, a pôngyi who has been ten Lents in the Order, and

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

643 the peacock and the hare, typifying the descent of the king from the solar and lunar races, which was also directly laid claim to in the title, netwetbuyin, sovereign of the rising sun. Similarly with the titles khattia, implying that he had dominion over the crops, and yaza, because he could instruct men in the laws, a somewhat doubtful ability in regard to all except perhaps King Mindôn. The consecration by beittheit was completed in three special ceremonies, as was the case with the Payālaung chosen to be the first ruler.

1. Yaza-beit, the consecrating of him as king.

2. Manda beittheit, the solemn marrying him to a queen of royal lineage.

3. Thenga beittheit, the confirmation or renewal of his engagement to abide by the laws, whereupon full powers for the government and administration of the country are conferred.

643 773 177 793 The actual coronation ceremony was latterly a mere form, but was intended to mark the claim of the Lord of the Golden Palace to be the representative of the universal monarch, the Sekyawadé king, who never makes his appearance during the time allotted to the publication and duration of the religious institutions of a Buddha. It consisted principally in incantations and sprinkling with holy water from the Ganges, performed by the pônnas, the Brahmin astrologers; the Burman yahans had nothing whatever to do with it. Besides the pônnas, only a few of the chief ministers were present. The really national part of the ceremony was the royal progress round the city moat, made seven days after the beittheit. The king left 643 175 the city by the Eastern Gate, the precise moment being notified by a discharge of cannon. He then entered the state barge, a most gorgeously gilt and carved construction, surpassing even the traditional coach of the Lord Mayor of London. This boat was then slowly rowed round the moat, with music clashing all around, and bands of dancers supplying the place of a rejoicing populace. Then when the circuit had been completed, the newly crowned monarch entered again between the guardian ogres of the Eastern Gate, a fresh salvo of artillery announcing the arrival at the palace. The ceremony was simple enough, but King

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

764 carried off by the grave-diggers. None but an outcast would venture to do such a thing.

By this time, or, if the death occurred at night, in the early morning, the band has arrived, and commences to play dirges in front of the house. The Sula-gandi monks greatly disapprove of this practice, as savouring of ostentation, and their followers therefore often dispense with the band, as do many Burmans in the large English towns. But otherwise the band is always engaged, and plays on steadily till the funeral takes place. Almost invariably, too, one or more of
● [793] the yahans from the monastery come along and stay in the house, their presence being invaluable in keeping away evil spirits, who might otherwise loiter about the place. The monk may or may not deliver a discourse, just as he sees fit. The body is then put into the coffin, which is a very flimsy kind of affair, ordinarily made of let-pan (*Bombax malabaricum*), a very light and porous kind of wood not unlike deal, or sometimes of eng tree (*Dipterocarpus tuberculatus*). This is fastened down roughly with any kind of nails that come to hand. A number of the relatives and friends now come to condole and lend their assistance in making and ornamenting the bier and hearse, most of them bringing presents
[476] of money or food with them. A few years ago a very meritorious society called Upathaka was started in Rangoon, the object of which was to provide decent and honourable burial for all members. The actual society did not last very long, but it served to show that the old feeling of mutual help still existed. At no time, however, have the Burmans been backward in this meitswe a-paung a-paw, which is one of the thirty-eight points insisted on in the Mingala-thut, the most favourite sermon of the Lord Buddha's. Friends and neighbours troop in with presents of a few pice, baskets of rice, meat, fruit, tobacco, betel, and material for decorating the bier, so that a man who in his lifetime never had a rupee to bless himself with, receives in Lower Burma a funeral grand enough to bring everybody connected with it under the scope of the sumptuary laws, if it were held in King Thibaw's territory.

The body is kept a longer or shorter time according to the station of the deceased. If he was rich, the preparation

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

of the funeral paraphernalia takes some time, and it is nowadays almost a matter of ceremonial necessity that all children and blood relations should assemble for the burial. Technically, if the death occurred on the last day of the month the funeral ceremonies should take place before midnight, certainly before the new moon appears. This rule, however, is far from being strictly observed nowadays. A poor man is buried as quickly as possible to save expense; a rich man's obsequies last according to the pride of his family and their inclination to spend money. The coffin, called hkaung, is usually covered with tinsel paper, or perhaps gilt. The talā, the bier, is shaded by a light canopy, or spire made of bamboo, and carried by means of four long bamboo poles. This pya-that is usually most gaily decorated with coloured pasteboard, tinsel, and paintings of different kinds, and looks strangely bright and theatrical to Europeans. It is carpentered and decorated in the street before the house, for it is from eight or ten to twenty or thirty feet in height, and often overtops all the houses in the quarter.

When the day fixed for the funeral arrives the yahans are invited to the house. They usually come in numbers proportioned to the amount of alms given. There is ordinarily an address in the house, dwelling mainly on the vanity of human wishes and the uncertainty and misery of life on earth. Then the coffin is brought out and placed on the platform made for it in the lower part of the pya-that. Over it is then thrown a paso if the deceased was a man, or a tamein or neckerchief if a woman. This usually conceals the coffin, unless it is richly gilt, or painted, as is sometimes the case, with figures of the nobler of the animals, such as lions, tigers, monkeys, and elephants. Then the distinctive garment is looped up so that all may see. Over this cloth are usually placed short sticks wrapped round with gold and silver paper, shwe bidôn and ngwe bidôn which were forbidden in Mandalay except to the officials. Equally contrary to the Yazagaing are the sanda ya-mya, two long streamers which come down from the top of the spire and are taken in the hands of as many of the personal friends as can get hold of them. The musket shots which are fired often during the processions would have entailed especially

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

IV

RELIGION

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The people of Tadagale are overwhelmingly Theravada Buddhist in faith. The exceptions are the Indian minority, who are largely Hindus. There are three Indians who profess Mohammedanism, and three Indo-Burmans and one Pakistani of like faith. Being Burmese and Buddhist are almost identified in the thinking of the majority, as evidenced by the fact that almost all replied 'Burmese Buddhist' to the question, 'To what people do you consider yourself to belong?'

In discussing the religious life of Tadagale, realism calls for emphasis upon actual religious beliefs and behavior, rather than any extended setting down of the formal theology of Buddhism. The latter has been done in any number of specialized works, to which the interested reader may refer. Here we shall refer to Buddhist precepts insofar as is necessary to illuminate religious beliefs and practices of the villagers.

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The Five Precepts or Commandments. Almost all villagers know well the fundamental Buddhist injunctions against the taking of life in any form, the consumption of alcohol, illicit sexual activity, theft, and prevarication. These moral rules are, of course, sometimes breached. In Tadagale, the use of alcohol, sometimes to excess, is perhaps the most notable instance. The 'good Buddhist' does not, however, seem to experience feelings of guilt or pangs of conscience in such matters. Rather, the following of the moral precepts has instrumental value for him, in relation to his accumulation of merit and his reincarnation after death.

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Merit. One's behavior throughout life determines one's store of merit, and this, in turn, determines one's reincarnation after death. Morally proper behavior, such as the following of the five basic commandments of Buddhist faith, is regarded as contributing to one's store of merit and thus enhancing one's state of reincarnation after death. Religious acts, such as making daily offerings of food to the monks, saying prayers, and attending the pagoda festivals on the important sacred days are likewise considered to increase one's merit. Breaking the moral precepts, irreligiousity, acting selfish or quarrelsome, detract from merit and accordingly tend to lower one's state in reincarnation.

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Such is about the extent of the average villager's lay conception and understanding of the moral code and the ideas of the afterlife in Buddhism. He has little or no knowledge of the detailed concepts of reincarnation, with its elaborate gradationary ladder leading from the four states of punishment up to the ultimate achievement of Nirvana. Such theological learning is the property of the monkhood and of a few laymen who spent more than the usual few years as pupils in the monastic school.

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Functions of the Monks. The functions of the Buddhist monks in the village may be conveniently classified as three-fold: formal education; officiation at certain rites; and providing personal advice and guidance to individuals.

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With respect to formal education, the monks of four monasteries close to the village conduct schools which are attended by a considerable number of

792 871 the small boys, as day pupils. Monastic education is a traditional part of Burmese Buddhism, and almost all the men of Tadagale, whether reared in the village or elsewhere, have attended monastic schools for varying lengths of time.

792 872 876 The monastic school curriculum includes elementary reading, writing and arithmetic, rudiments of history and geography, heavily colored by Burmese cosmology and folklore, and instruction in Buddhist precepts and proper conduct. There is heavy emphasis upon proper conduct. Instruction takes the form of mass recitation and rote memorization. Discipline is strict and the inattentive pupil is kept alert, when necessary, by means of the rod. As indicated earlier, many parents in the village favor the monastic as against the public school because of the strict discipline and the emphasis upon conduct and religion.

• 793 Concerning the second function of the monks, officiation at certain rites, it should be indicated that because Burmese Buddhism is not a congregational type of religion, the monks are not called upon to officiate at regular assemblies in any fashion akin to the role of the Christian minister. The monks do, however, play an important part in the initiation of boys into the monkhood; and sometimes take part in funeral rites.

The monk's function of giving advice and guidance stems from the fact that he is regarded, in the thinking of the villagers, not only as one to whom the greatest respect and deference is due by virtue of his dedication to his life to religion, but also as a living repository of wisdom and universal knowledge. He is a person to whom one may turn in time of uncertainty, doubt or stress for personal counsel. Problems relating to the conduct of one's children; concern over persistent lack of success in one's economic activities; or even matters of health may be taken to the monk. A great deal of the advice rendered by monks is formulaic, folkloristic and magical in nature. Particular monks tend to acquire reputations as being especially wise and helpful in particular kinds of problems.

792 735 Support of the Monks. The monastery buildings and the land on which they stand are the property of the monastic order, held in perpetuity by grant of the government, free of taxation.

[624] The monks are supported by the donations of the villagers. Every morning a monk, accompanied by one or two monastic school pupils, passes through the village to collect offerings of food. As he enters the compound of each home a member of the household takes a pot of cooked rice, which has been prepared for the morning meal, and places a few large spoonsful in the monk's begging bowl. This minimum daily contribution of food is made by every Buddhist household, without exception; in addition, many families send bowls of curry and rice to the monastery. Giving food to the monks is an important act of merit to Burmese Buddhists. It is regarded as unthinkable that any household would refuse. When the hypothetical case was posed of such a deviant household, villagers agreed that such a family would be severely criticized and shunned in the village.

The few other things that the monks require for their austere existence are given by villagers on the important ceremonial days of the year. These items include robes, soap, matches, begging bowls, water strainers and needles.

796 Duty Days. The Burmese calendar is a lunar one, and in each month there are four days -- duty or sabbath days -- on which the villagers go to the monastery

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

people themselves—a hundred years behind them in civilization, a thousand years behind them in morality. Men will do in the name of government acts which, if performed in a private capacity, would cover them with shame before men, and would land them in a gaol or worse. The name of government is a cloak for the worst passions of manhood. It is not an interesting study, the government of mankind.

A government is no part of the soul of the people, but is a mere excrescence; and so I have but little to say about this of Burma, beyond this curious fact—that religion had no part in it. Surely this is a very remarkable thing, that a religion having the hold upon its followers that Buddhism has upon the Burmese has never attempted to grasp the supreme authority and use it to its ends.

It is not quite an explanation to say that Buddhism is not concerned with such things; that its very spirit is against the assumption of any worldly power and authority; that it is a negation of the value of these things. Something of this sort might be said of other religions, and yet they have all striven to use the temporal power.

I do not know what the explanation is unless it be that the Burmese believe their religion and other people do not. However that may be, there is no doubt of the fact. Religion had nothing whatever—absolutely nothing in any way at all—to do with government. There are no exceptions. What has led people to think sometimes that there were exceptions is the fact that the king confirmed the Thathanabaing—the head of the community of monks—

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

after he had been elected by his fellow-monks. The reason of this was as follows: All ecclesiastical matters—I use the word 'ecclesiastical' because I can find no other—were outside the jurisdiction of civil limits. By 'ecclesiastical' I mean such matters as referred to the ownership and habitation of monasteries, the building of pagodas and places of prayer, the discipline of the monkhood. Such questions were decided by ecclesiastical courts under the Thathanabaing.

Now, it was necessary sometimes, as may be understood, to enforce these decrees, and for that reason to apply to civil power. Therefore there must be a head of the monks acknowledged by the civil power as head, to make such applications as might be necessary in this, and perhaps some other such circumstances.

It became, therefore, the custom for the king to acknowledge by order the elect of the monks as Thathanabaing for all such purposes. That was all. The king did not appoint him at all.

Any such idea as a monk interfering in the affairs of state, or expressing an opinion on war or law or finance, would appear to the Burmese a negation of their faith. They were never led away by the idea that good might come of such interference. This terrible snare has never caught their feet. They hold that a man's first duty is to his own soul. Never think that you can do good to others at the same time as you injure yourself, and the greatest good for your own heart is to learn that beyond all this turmoil and fret there is the Great Peace—so great that we can hardly understand it, and to reach

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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90. PAYA SUN-KAN.

(*Payà sun-kan*), or privately prepared, is conveyed. The day is devoted to contemplation, and the night is passed at the *zayát*. Those who keep the duty-day present offerings at the *zedi* and the adjoining *kyaung*. At either of these places a *yahán* is invited to rehearse the precepts, which the laity chant verse by verse after his lead (*thilo-kan*). Passages from other scriptures are added, with their interpretations. This is called *Tayà-haw*—the preaching of the Law. The great Mun King, Yazadiyit of Pegu, in the year 1400 A.D., is reported to have been so impressed by the preaching of a *yahán* that he abandoned a campaign on which he had embarked. More than once in Burman history the peaceful contest of building rival temples has been substituted for battle by opposing armies.

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The Buddha has passed out of existence. While existent, all that the Buddha could accomplish for any being was the human service of showing him the way, to work out deliverance by individual effort. Self-reliance is the cardinal principle. There is none to hear prayer. The true significance of the popular worship is not apprehended unless this be borne in mind. No virtue can surpass that of the Inestimable Master (*Myassua Payà*) who fulfilled the Law and bequeathed it to men. To cultivate the memory of his transcendent merit is itself meritorious in the first degree. Such is the personal side of the cult, to which the effigies of the founder appeal. Before the images of the Buddha are performed the gestures of homage, and are placed offerings symbolical of veneration — tapers lighted at the shrine, flowers

91. YAHAN RECITING THE PRECEPTS (TAYA-HAW).

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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Old men will retire to the monastery to end their days there, and younger men, in poverty or other distress, will flee the world for a time. The hospitality of the monks has sometimes been more charitable than discriminate, a circumstances which has brought some monasteries into disrepute, for these temporary inhabitants are allowed to wear the yellow robe, and some are criminals, sheltering from justice. Father Sangermano reports the rescue of prisoners condemned to death. "In thus saving the lives of criminals, (the monks) believe that, as their law forbids them to kill, it must be meritorious to preserve the lives of others."[34]

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The monastery is the social centre of the village. Buddhism in Burma is gaily attired, a religion of festival. Frequently there will be an open-air performance in the moonlight, when a birth-story of the Buddha is dramatized. All this spirited, colourful life gathers around the monastery.

But perhaps the Order's most valuable service to the community is the function fulfilled by the monk as *counsellor*. A group of villagers may gather for a special instruction, others may attend when the monks assemble for devotions, but the monastery is not regarded as a preaching centre or as a place of public worship. In modern times, crowds have flocked to hear the Monyin Sayadaw. Generally, however, the approach in this respect is individual. It is as the individual adviser of each villager that the monk's influence is most strongly felt.

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In many and tangible ways, therefore, the monastery serves the community, but it is probable that the villager himself reveres the monk more for services which are intangible and may not appear so valuable to sceptical observers. Early in the morning, the monk, attended by *koyins*, will go the round of the faithful, receiving their offerings of rice in his begging bowl.[35] For the monk himself it is an exercise in humility, for the villager it is one of the chief means of increasing that *kutho* or worthiness which ensures him happiness in this life and the next.[36]

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Most of all, however, it is those very aspects of the monk's vocation which distinguish him from the rest of the community, setting him apart, for which the monk is chiefly esteemed. It is because the greater part of his life is spent in spiritual exercises which the villagers do *not* share, that they value him most. The monastery stands for a Way of utter renun-

[34] *The Burmese Empire*, 3d. Edition, ed. J. Jardine, (London, 1893), chap. xv, p. 122.

[35] Thus *bhikku or bhikyu*, usually translated monk, means, literally, mendicant. Strictly speaking, a *bhikku* is not a monk; cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II (S.B.B.), p. 81, footnote.

[36] *Kutho* is frequently translated 'merit.' But 'worthiness' is more accurate.